

Educational Systems Review (ESR) Overview

The Educational Systems Review (ESR) provides the framework, protocol and tools needed for schools to engage in effective school improvement planning through including the input of all major stakeholder groups including school leadership, instructional personnel, parents and students. The process reveals both the facilitators and barriers to student learning that have or could prevent students from achieving learning goals to support development of targeted School Improvement Plans and improve of the school's capacity for continuous improvement. The ESR process utilizes the problem solving process and provides tools and resources necessary to:

- View current academic and engagement issues to create student performance goals.
- Recognize facilitators of and barriers to achieving student performance goals and determine organizational priorities for improvement planning.
- Determine barriers that cause or contribute to the organizational priorities.
- Develop, execute, and monitor specific and targeted school improvement action plans to address barriers that cause or contribute to organizational priorities, resulting in student achievement barriers.
- Identify and systematically address system's level barriers to sustained continuous improvement.

The first stage of the ESR, stage 0, includes team readiness that prepares the school team for self-study and problem solving that focuses on student outcome goals. Here the team aligns the organizational priorities to ensure student success and determining the contributing barrier that prevents achievement. During this stage the team realizes the purpose, process, tools and expected outcomes of the ESR. The team develops norms, roles and responsibilities, develops an implementation plan and gathers student performance data for analysis.

Stage 1 sets or refines the academic and engagement goals to determine the focus and scope of the ESR. The task is to analyze academic and engagement trend data to determine intensity (i.e., degree of difference between expected and current levels), and the breadth (e.g., school-wide versus grade level, cross content versus specific content area, etc.) of academic and engagement barriers. This stage also ensures both short and long-term goals are specific, measurable, ambitious, realistic and time-bound (SMART).

The next stage, stage 2, selects the organizational priorities for action planning through identifying the high probability barriers to achieving student performance goals. The organizational priorities for action planning are determined through reviewing standards-based instruction and student engagement.

Data collection begins with determining the organizational priorities to standards based instruction and student engagement, which are most directly related to

student outcomes. The components of these priorities include setting and communicating a purpose for learning, the gradual release of responsibility, instructional rigor, and engaging instruction. Each component is comprised of a set of observable and measurable indicators targeted on the majority indicators through structured observations specially designed to collect data on each indicator. These data are collected to reveal significant school-wide trends. They do not focus on individual teacher performance, and are collected and reported as group data. Additionally, data collection and the discussion process does not allow for individual teachers to be identified.

Stage 3 identifies the contributing barriers, which cause or contribute to the selected organizational priorities, to address during action planning to achieve student performance goals. This stage reviews the instructional learning goals, the organization and instructional planning processes, instructional expectations, monitoring and feedback processes, and the use of assessment and data systems. Examined also are the sufficiency of instructional efficacy, time and planning, and the professional development and coaching processes. Engagement through discussion in focus groups with teachers and students allow each stakeholder group to engage in brainstorming ideas specifically aligned with organizational priority and prioritized contributing barriers.

During Stage 4, the team develops specific action plans to address barriers that cause or contribute to the selected organizational priorities that prevent the achievement of student performance goals. Action plans are developed to address contributing barriers to achieve the organizational priority and student performance goals. These include detailed implementation steps, progress monitoring, and data analysis to determine progress to assist schools and districts in assessing fidelity of the action plan.

Finally, Stage 5 evaluates the sufficiency of the action plan for removing/lessening the contributing barriers, achieving the organizational priorities, and achieving the student performance goals, and revise action plan as needed.

Ongoing district and school reflection and action planning for sustained continuous improvement identify, analyze, and address systems-level barriers to continuous improvement. Several focus areas of targeted support rely in the areas of:

- Mission, Vision, and Aligned Goals
- Leadership and Leadership Team Effectiveness
- Teaming Organization and Processes
- Assessment and Data Systems
- PK-12 Alignment and Transition Planning
- Master Schedule Development
- Professional Capacity and Development
- Family and Community Engagement

The ESR emphasizes a link between a school's capacity for continuous improvement and organizational issues that result in student achievement barriers. The district team supports school teams in understanding and addressing the root causes of achievement barriers.